SENATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Meeting of Thursday, March 21, 1996
Room BC-110, 10:30

Present: V. Baba, E. Besso, P. Bird, T. Bui (Chair), G. Garvey, D. Gold, E. Loo (recording secretary), D. Markiewicz, D. Pariser, S. Suen, J. Tomberlin, M. Vipond

Absent: K. Bolh, F. Haghighat, R. Storms

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED AND DISTRIBUTED TO SENATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

SRC-03-21-96-A	Agenda for the SRC Meeting of March 21, 1996
SRC-02-15-96-M	Minutes of the SRC Meeting of February 15, 1996
SRC-03-21-96-D1	Response to the report of the auditor general of Québec concerning research and teaching: Letter dated February 7, 1996 from Mr. Alain Caillé, Vice-Rector, Research, Université de Sherbrooke to Mr. Pierre Reid, President of CREPUQ.
SRC-03-21-96-D2	CREPUQ document entitled Les Défis du Savoir - Éléments de Politique Scientifique et Technologique.
SRC-03-21-96-D3	Letter dated March 4, 1996 from Mr. Yves Rousseau of Fonds FCAR to Dr. Tien Bui.
SRC-03-21-96-D4	Memorandum dated March 8, 1996 from Dr. Thomas A. Brzustowski of NSERC, re: NSERC and the 1996 Federal Budget.
SRC-03-21-96-D5	Highlights of the Federal Budget compiled by AUCC.
SRC-03-21-96-D6a	Implementation of the Policy on Indirect Cost recovery from Grants not accredited by SIRU.
SRC-03-21-96-D6b	Memo dated February 28, 1996 from Dr. T. Bui to Dr. J. Lightstone, re Overhead policy.
SRC-03-21-96-D6c	Policy on Indirect Costs Recovery From Research Funding Agencies Not Accredited by SIRU.
SRC-03-21-96-D7	Exposé de la situation présenté par la Commission des États généraux sur l'éducation

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m.

1. Approval of Agenda (SRC-02-15-96-A)

The Revised Agenda for the meeting was approved.

2. Approval of Minutes from the meeting of December 14, 1995.

Some changes were made to the last paragraph of page 4: "V. Baba noted that our response should bring to light the symbiotic nature of graduate education and research while the cost of one course reduction is about $20M, it is indeed offset by an increase in research output and research training. He thinks our response ...."

The Minutes for the January meeting were approved.

3. Business arising from Minutes

Chair noted that Item 6 related to the question posed by E. Besso with regard to the number of departures in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, another person, Marc Comeau is leaving the University.

Item 7(a) Response of the auditor general of Quebec - The president of comité de la recherche of CREPUQ revised his letter almost completely deleting all those statistics but made a strong case with regard to teaching and the importance of research in training. The letter was sent on behalf of comité de la recherche.

Item 7(c) on the distribution of the frais indirect, the document will be brought to this committee at the next meeting, a sub-group of this committee consisting of the Associate and Vice Deans, Research and D. Pushkar Gold, are working on it.

The last item with regard to the process to recognize research achievement, ORS has a list of all awards and prizes and some announcement of those prizes and their conditions.

4. Report of the Chair

Chair remarked that Dr. Lightstone has authorised the purchase of the Canadian University Indicators package from ISI.

The comité exécutif of CREPUQ has approved the new policy document prepared by the task force on "principe des normes éthiques universitaire du Québec en enseignement et recherche". All universities are asked to revise their policies in light of this.

5. Report of the Director, Office of Research Services

- She has received the resignation of Simon Durham, Manager of the Industrial Liaison Unit, he will be leaving the University as of March 22. She still has a vacant Contract Officer position but she will be interviewing two candidates and she hopes this position will be filled within the next three weeks.

5. Report of the Director, Office of Research Services

- She gave a brief report on the meeting which took place yesterday afternoon on Distance Education. The outcome is less than positive, in so far it is evident that the Education group is not at this point ready to make an external presentation which would generate partnership with the private sector and although there have been some comments at the end of the meeting that it is a very good opportunity and would be unfortunate to pass up, they are not in a position to pursue it at this point in time.

- The Research Brochure HORIZONS is ready to go to press except for the fact that the budget source has still not been defined, we expect that it will be supported by the Office of the Rector now and information as to the source needs to be received before going to press, its on hold hopefully briefly.

- Two events which are being organised by the Office of Research Services: The first one will be next Thursday, March 28, it is a workshop on Human Research Ethics. It is for research principally motivated by the desire to give a very good start to the departmental ethics committees involving human subjects and to inform faculty members.

  The second event which we are preparing is an open house of the Office Research Services, which will take place on May 14. We have a number of new ways of addressing the administration of research, the dissemination of opportunities. We'd like to make this progress visible to our faculty members principally and to put faces to our names and to find out the service we can provide to our Faculty members for enhancing research activities.

- Since early 1996 when Dr. B. Sahni was named new Director for the Centre for International Academic Cooperation (CIAC), there has been more dialogue between ORS and the CIAC and this has resulted in opportunities for international collaboration and research. She expressed her concern about the mandate of the CIAC with regard to research in the international context. There has to be a definition regarding who is going to move these involvements forward.

- We have started receiving results from the granting agency competition. We've received results from SSHRC Strategic competition and this is only one from the Social Science and the Humanities. At this point, we unfortunately did not receive any awards but out of six applications, we've had four in the 4A category which means recommended for funding but no funding awarded because of lack of funds.

- We've received the results from NSERC and at first glance, we appear to have performed quite positively with respect to our past three years, with a success rate above 50% overall in new applicant category. There were 6 new major equipment grants totalling half a million $.

6. Question Period

V. Baba remarked that perhaps there is a need to put forward some kind of proposal to the international body because in some faculties training and research are much closer, for example, in the Faculty of Commerce and Administration there are two sides of the same kind so there are things to be learned, things to be getting from there by having a closer collaboration between training and research.

E. Besso: My understanding when I joined Concordia, was that the CIAC was mandated to administer international contact both for training and for research, the reality is that the ability for this office to do so was such that researchers come to ORS requesting that we repatriate the Coopération Grants & Agreements and others of this type because they were not getting the support from CIAC. Dr. Mabley left in 1995 and with Dr. Sahni taking on those duties there was some talk of defining the mandate more clearly and within that definition, research seems to have disappeared and I am concerned about the coordination which will affect faculty members.

P. Bird commented that with regard to the 4 A's, he felt that for the last two to three years the cut has become much too big and it is becoming a pat on the back. With regard to the International collaboration and research, in the Faculty of Arts & Science, there is a vice Dean who is responsible for international relation and a vice Dean who has research in his title and he is not sure if this is the best arrangement, however, it might be worth to have an input from the Faculty of Arts & Science.

Chair will bring this issue to the Vice-Rector, Academic. He is not sure if the mandate of the ORS has to be revised in order to take this into account or the mandate of CIAC has to be re-emphasized because originally it was the mandate of the CIAC which has both training and research in many projects.

7a. Exposé de la situation présenté par la Commission des États généraux sur l'éducation (SRC-03-21-96-D7)

CREPUQ has decided to solicit input from universities in order to develop a common response to the commission at the meeting of the CREPUQ at the end of April. The questions are related to research and teaching, these questions were formulated by the commission with the intention to initiate the debate and CREPUQ suggested that it is up to Québec universities to decide to respond.

The first three questions, numbers 5, 6 and 7 are related to mission and policy. The last four questions are more or less related to curriculum and teaching.

The following comments were noted:

- It has become extremely competitive to obtain research grants particularly in the humanities and social sciences. To be successful in research and hence in obtaining research funding, it requires collective and sometimes institutional efforts. Individual efforts are a necessary condition but no longer a sufficient condition for success.

- There is also a lot of prestige attached to research while teaching does not receive the same kind of recognitions.

7a. Exposé de la situation présenté par la Commission des États généraux sur l'éducation (SRC-03-21-96-D7)

- When we talk about teaching there is a tendency to ignore graduate education, but the amount of time involved in teaching graduate students is enormous. The quality of teaching at the graduate level is directly related to the quality of research carried out in universities.

- Professionals trained by professional organizations would not benefit from the research done in universities. On the other hand, research done in industries or specialized institutes would not help the training of highly qualified personnel as can be done only in universities. There are very few types of research which would not benefit the training of students.

- Universities should be more efficient and perhaps become smaller, however to avoid duplications completely would be a mistake. Some duplications of programmes in fact generate competitions which are needed in a healthy environment and to initiate strong development of a discipline. Each university should preserve its strengths and eliminate its weaknesses. In that way, universities can become smaller but better and capable of serving our society more efficiently.

- Research in universities provides opportunities for student training in both graduate and undergraduate levels. The two-tier system: universities with only undergraduate education and universities for research and graduate education will destroy this balance.

7b Implementation of the Policy on Indirect Cost recovery from Grants not accredited by SIRU. (SRC-03-21-96-D6a)
Memo dated February 28, 1996 from Dr. T. Bui to Dr. J. Lightstone, re Overhead policy. (SRC-03-21-96-D6b)
Policy on Indirect Costs Recovery From Research Funding Agencies Not Accredited by SIRU. (SRC-03-21-96-D6c)

Chair remarked that these documents are related to the implementation of recovering indirect cost on grants coming from funding agencies not accredited by SIRU and the policy was developed in the context of the agreement made by Québec universities. The implementation of this policy brought a number of issues:

- The agreement is not being applied uniformly among Québec universities, some universities including Concordia have an internal policy, others do not have one yet.
- How do we deal with exceptional cases and who makes the decision?
- How is the policy applied when applications are submitted and sent to the university?

Chair brought to the attention of the SRC members, his memo to the Vice-Rector, Academic, and this came up when P. Shizgal submitted an application which followed an invitation of the Howard Hughes Medical Foundation. The foundation has a policy which allows a maximum of 10% of the budget to be charged on overhead, clearly this policy is in contradiction with internal policy. In the case of P. Shizgal, the problem was solved, it was agreed that 10%, particularly this is an invitation and the practice of all university for the kind of biomedical research is 10% and 10% is the lowest that the University can go, so it was approved.

7b Implementation of the Policy on Indirect Cost recovery from Grants not accredited by SIRU. (SRC-03-21-96-D6a)
Memo dated February 28, 1996 from Dr. T. Bui to Dr. J. Lightstone, re Overhead policy. (SRC-03-21-96-D6b)
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E. Besso commented on Chair's memo to the Vice-Rector, Academic with regard to Granting Agencies, this is a non viable suggestion particularly given the reality that, research services has a large number of grants and contracts that get drafted, discussions go on for quite a long time, we are not in a position at this point of time to come and say we are not authorising this application. Perhaps the second comment you would like to consider, in order perhaps to be applicable we need to educate essentially all our applicants. If there is no overhead that can be charged from that source then one structures one's budget so that it would include the amount of overhead, and to reduce the amount you plan to make in salaries and materials etc. This is an internal honor and faculty expectation, exclusive the cost it will incur, the basis for applying such a policy, it's costing Concordia 15% of any research expenditure to support the activity. This money has to be recovered from somewhere and that's the only viable aspect that I can see enforcing, so there are two points: what the other universities are really doing and not what we wish was the case and secondly how this actually can be done within Concordia.

Chair remarked that this is a concern he had expressed to other universities as well is that if some universities are going to do what E. Besso just mentioned, that is to allow researchers to apply to granting agencies which have a policy which does not allow indirect cost/overhead charges, it will encourage other agencies to follow and that will defeat the purpose of this policy from the start. Quebec universities have realised that but where do we put a line, this is a very difficult issue unless/until you put a line of defense clearly and it is clear to the agencies that this is the case otherwise we are going to have problems and at the end we can forget about this policy.

P. Bird did not agree with the invitation business, if we don't have a line on that and the agency realises that, they are all going to rule out the overheads. If we start accepting things that are on invitation at all, they will start inviting. He would like to see the line held at 15%.

Chair remarked that he does not want to penalize the researchers, it is very clear in some universities they do not apply this, they go through loopholes.

8. For Information

9. Other Business

It was moved that the meeting be adjourned.

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